(b) The research projects initiated and on-going at Alapuzha Centre for the last three years are: Fishery and biology of selected prawn species in Kayamkulam backwaters (2000-01 and 2001-02); Ecology and bio-diversity of Kayamkulam lake (2002—05). The studies pertain to ecology and fisheries of backwaters of Kerala, focusing on Kayamkulam lake.

(c) to (e) In view of the need to address emerging areas such as eco-modeling, fisheries management with GIS and related studies, it has become necessary to have upgraded facilities and critical scientific mass at a few selected Centres for achieving competitive edge at global level, that would be difficult to be undertaken at Alapuzha Centre, housed in a rented building with a few technical staff only. These studies could be undertaken only at a few Centres, that however, would cover the aquatic resources of the entire country. The CIFRI Centre at Bangalore, is mandated to address the inland fisheries of the four southern States. Hence, it was felt to shift the programmes of Alapuzha Centre to Bangalore Research Centre, during Tenth Plan EFC Meeting of CIFRI, Barrackpore, held in New Delhi on 20.6.2003. However, further in-depth analysis is on and Alapuzha Centre is being continued on the existing basis till a final decision is taken.

Extinction of aromatic varieties of paddy

†506. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state.

(a) whether in absence of Government protection, a number of varieties of traditional Indian aromatic paddy became extinct sharply during the last few decades;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps Government are taking to save the varieties of aromatic traditional paddy from becoming extinct?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) No, Sir.

(c) Not Applicable.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) (i) Government has taken effective steps to save the various aromatic traditional rice varieties from becoming extinct. Central Rice Research Institute, Cuttack has a Genetic Resources Division which is particularly addressing to the problem of collection and conservation of rice varieties particularly that of aromatic rice.

(ii) National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, New Delhi at the national level in the last 5 years have funded a NATP Project on "Plant Bio-diversity on Mission Mode" in which as many as 547 rice varieties have been collected and a number of them are of aromatic types. The National Gene Bank at NBPGR presently holds 66,594 rice accessions of which 60,759 are indigenous. The indigenous collection includes aromatic rice from different parts of the country, for example there are 136 accessions of scented rice from eastern U.P.

(iii) In addition through the ICAR Network Programme on "Genetic Enhancement of Aromatic Short Grain Rices for Higher Productivity and Export" as many as 200 accessions of aromatic rice varieties have been collected and evaluated which on documentation would be submitted to NBPGR, New Delhi for long term storage by Directorate of Rice Research, Hyderabad.

States growing Bt. cotton

†507. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the approved variety and unapproved variety of Bt. Cotton are being produced in the country;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard; and

(c) the names of States where approved variety and unapproved variety of Bt. Cotton are likely to be produced in 2004-05?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.